

NOAA EEO Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 12, 2002

Members Present:

Council Chairman - Capt. Richard R. Behn (Ex. Dir. - DUSEC)

Council Members: Alfred Corea (CRO/OFA), Jim Faulkner for Barbra Marshall-Bailey (Diversity), Frances Silva, (OGC), Theodoris Corbett for Zane Schauer (HR), Ralph Conlin for Mary Glackin (NESDIS), Jamison Hawkins (NOS), James Su (NWS), John Jones (NWS), John Oliver (NMFS), CDR Philip Kenul (OMAO), Anibal Mulero (NMFS), Bob Taylor (OMAO), Erica Van Coverden (OAR), Patricia Buckley (NWS), Karen Benedict (HR), David Murdock for Helen Hurcombe (OFA) .

Approval of Minutes:

Al Corea asked the Council to consider accepting the draft minutes of November 9, 2001. The Council approved the minutes without corrections by a consensus vote. Al Corea discussed the duties of recording secretary, asking if the Council would consider rotating the responsibility between members. The board accepted and Erica Van Coverden recorded minutes for the 3/12/02 meeting.

Anibal Mulero suggested and all agreed that the minutes should be distributed and approved via email soon after the meetings. The minutes will then be posted on the EEO Council website.

Announcements and handouts:

Al Corea mentioned the handout re: the NOAA Faculty and Student Intern Research Program, administered by CRO. The application deadline for hosting a student is March 15.

Al reminded those in Silver Spring that "Bring Your Child to Work Day" is coming up in April and they should register if planning to bring a child. The registration form is on line at: <http://www.education.noaa.gov>.

An harassment statement distributed by OMAO was presented as an excellent example of a very strong sexual harassment statement. Members should consider borrowing from it for LO and organizational uses. Al stressed that an organization wishing to issue a similar statement should work with the Office of General Counsel and the Office of civil Rights.

Presentations:

Natalie Smith - 508 Compliance presentation

A brochure was introduced outlining the 508 policies and procedures. Anything procured must now be in compliance with Section 508, which requires accessibility to the disabled in areas such as software, web pages, equipment, video tapes, etc. She stated that Section 508 is not getting the publicity it should. It became effective 6/21/01 (all purchases after that date must comply, but no need to go back and change). Every two years NOAA must report to Congress on what they've done. Natalie stated they are working with vendors to comply with the law and that NOAA has a pretty good track record. Standards are geared largely towards visually impaired but also cover those with learning disabilities. ALL videotapes must be captioned, no matter the quantity and can cost from \$600/hour to add a post-caption or \$300 to caption live.

Natalie is on DOC and GSA 508 Committees. Call her (301-713-3525, ext. 213) if you have any questions or would like additional brochures. The brochure lists 2 NOAA employees who are available for testing websites with reading software. For more information on 508, visit the NOAA 508 website at: www.section508.noaa.gov

Al Corea mentioned that the CAP program is available for those who need to purchase reading software or equipment for employees. See the OCR for more information.

Jim Faulkner - SFA

SFA facilitator training is underway for 120 NOAA facilitators. The Diversity Office is compiling data submitted to set up sessions with workgroups and information should be disseminated to managers/supervisors by end of March. On April 19, 2002, there will be a Diversity Council meeting devoted to SFA and there may be an Executive Briefing for the EEO Council at a future date.

To date, there was a 76 percent NOAA response rate. There was a 70 percent NOAA response rate in 1998. On-line probably made the difference. There were some questions on the demographic data that was in the survey. This information should not go below the highest NOAA management level. More about SFA at: <http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/diversity.html> Specific questions about SFA should be directed to the Office of Diversity (301-713-1966).

It was suggested that Al Corea attend the debriefing meeting where all preliminary & compiled data will be presented to the Diversity Committee. Our interest is primarily in the EEO related responses and Al agreed to attend the review of EEO sections.

Committee Reports:

Communications, Anibal Mulero

Anibal reported on suggested activities or priorities given to the Communications Subcommittee four years ago and fielded comments on current status. The Council authorized the Communications Subcommittee to update, modify or delete those activities that are no longer relevant and establish new communication projects or activities.

Two suggestions were made:

- 1) Establish, and maintain an EEO Council website and look for new ways to promote its' existence such as NOAA Access or the NOAA Report.
- 2) Recruit new subcommittee members, including at least one representative the NOAA Office of Public and Constituent Affairs.

Capt Richard Behn offered to check with several employees who would be able to help the committee accomplish both of these goals.

Disabilities, Al Corea

Subcommittee Chair, John Wright, NWS was unavailable for the meeting. Al Corea reported on research into the issue of insufficient/limited parking for employees with disabilities at the Silver Spring Campus.

SSMC 1 is owned by GSA. Each floor is assigned 8 parking spaces, which are managed by the occupant. Ralph Conlin, speaking for NESDIS, which has employees in that building, stated that the needs of employees with disabilities are considered before space assignments are made to anyone else.

Currently the 1150 public parking spaces under SSMC 3 are owned and operated by Montgomery County. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that 22 spaces in that garage be designated for *Handicapped Parking*. The County meets ADA regulations by designating 23 spaces. They do not currently charge for parking in the designated spaces or in any of the other spaces for any vehicle which has a *Handicapped Parking Permit*. To deal with the needs of those individuals who need wider parking spaces, the County distributed flyers requesting that people who do not need the wider *Wheelchair Accessible* spaces park in other spaces free of charge in order to free up the wider spaces.

Parking under SSMC 4 is managed by Folger Pratt, who charge \$80 per month for non-disabled parkers and \$45 per month for people with disabilities. They designate 6 spaces for *Handicapped Parking*. Those spaces are rarely all occupied.

It was suggested that another letter be circulated reminding those with *Handicapped* permits that they may also park in regular spaces for free under SSMC 3. Al will issue the letters. It was suggested that this information be placed in employee orientation packets as well. A suggestion was also made to write a letter requesting Montgomery County to designate more spots as wheel chair only access. This will be considered at a later time.

Al briefly discussed a proposal for support of the High School High Tech program and asked members to review the relevant information in their packets. This will be discussed at the next council meeting.

Under Representation. Al Corea

Al discussed NOAA's increasing support of the NAACP's Afro-Academic Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics (ACT-SO). The Offices of the Deputy Under Secretary, Policy and Strategic Planning and Civil Rights are sponsoring a number of activities. OMAO is providing an opportunity for up to five national winners to participate in a science cruise on board the *R/V Ron Brown* this August. Erica mentioned that she will be participating in this cruise as a NOAA liaison with the students.

Round Table:

Captain Behn announced that Jimmy Truesdale, NOS will be retiring and the council recognized Jimmy for all the work he has done in the area of disability issues.

Cdr. Phil Kenul, reported that OMAO capitalizing on the visibility of NOAA ships and planes and incorporating them into their internally produced recruitment brochures.

Jamie Hawkins reported on a number of activities in NOS, including: NOS EEO Program Manager, Michelle Crockett attended a CAP seminar; the NOA EEO Advisory Committee received training on a number of EEO related topics; a poster designed by the committee to heighten EEO awareness will be on display where NOS has a presence and; Margaret Davidson received approval from NOAA leadership to form a Charter Chapter of Federally Employed Women (FEW). On February 16, 2002 the completed Seas and Skies FEW petition Charter Chapter package was submitted and approved by the National Governing Board. To Commemorate Women's History Month, NOS along with the Office of Civil Rights will sponsor a training conference on March 20-21, 2002. The conference will include the formal launching of the NOAA Chapter of FEW along with career focused training on time management and professional/leadership development.

Jim Su, recommended that NOAA employees support the upcoming (May 2002) FAPAC conference, and thanked OCR for their sponsorship of a Lunar New Year celebration, where John Jones addressed the participants.

John Oliver announced that Natalie Huff will be recognized with a special act award for all her EEO related work for NMFS. Natalie mentioned vibrating pagers, which NMFS purchased so that hearing impaired employees may be contacted in emergency situations. Once tested, they may be offered to employees outside of NMFS.

John Jones announces that Gloria Walker has retired as the NWS EEO Manager and is succeeded by Rufus Carruthers. NWS will be focusing on the *retention* of minority and female employees.

Erica Van Coverden mentioned that the OAR EEO committee has been looking into problems with the COOL hiring system, specifically possible exclusion of those with no computer access, and the tendency for applicants to exaggerate levels of experience. Ralph suggested that HR make up a focus group of end users from all the LOs in order to evaluate the program and make suggestions for improvement.

Al Corea announced that Larry Beat has left NOAA and taken a position as the Executive Director of SACNAS, we wish him all the best.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 PM